

# PARISH PARTNERSHIP

## Wivelsfield's link with St Matthew's Aberdeen, Sierra Leone **BETTER TOGETHER**

### **NEWSLETTER 59**

**June 2019**

#### **CHRISTIAN AID WEEK – MAY 12-18.**

If you live within the parish you may well have received through your letter box in years past a Christian Aid Envelope. This year, because the usual organizer was incapacitated as the result of an accident, envelopes were not delivered.

There is a sad irony in this because Christian Aid's focus this year was on childbirth in Sierra Leone where, every day, 10 women are likely to die when giving birth. The story was told of Fatmata who went into labour but, because there were so few ambulances available, had no choice but to walk for 3 hours under a baking sun to the nearest hospital. She didn't make it and died on the side of the road and never gave birth.

**VIKKI.**

When we first visited Aberdeen a decade ago we stayed with Vikki Luke who was, and still is, a nurse in the area and who now specializes in maternity work. For some time we have been discussing ways in which to support her and it may be that we will be able to transfer funds to her in order that she can buy maternity goods as well as items which she herself needs but which are not supplied.

As soon as we have decided upon the best way to do this we will let you know.

#### **HOW BAD IS IT?**

If you have access to "Wivelsfield Monthly News" which is published by the Parish Church you will have read a longer version of what now follows.

It is based on information supplied by Charley (Charlotte) Hill who has been a member of our team and who has visited Sierra Leone several times both on our behalf and also for other charities such as "Street Child".

#### **CONDITIONS IN A FREETOWN HOSPITAL.**

Most new mums turn up without a "going home" outfit for their baby.

The hospital was over busy and with very basic facilities.

Rooms had a cot, a bed, a chair and a fan but rarely anything else.

Rubbish disposal facilities were *rumoured* to be appalling – merely thrown over a wall into a river. (A lot of medical waste washes up on nearby beaches although exactly where it comes from would be impossible to prove.)

## **CONDITIONS IN MAKENI. (Two to three years ago.)**

**Makeni is a 4 hour drive from Freetown – but on Sierra Leone’s unpaved roads that isn’t as far as one could do in 4 hours in the UK!**

**This rural maternity unit is even more basic.**

**One building with a waiting room and 2 other rooms, each with a bathroom.**

**But no running water, no electricity, dirty walls, a metal framed bed with a thin and dirty mattress.**

**One doctor serving an enormous rural area.**

**Women may only have access to a doctor once during their pregnancy.**

**Many women give birth in their villages rather than at the clinic.**

**The work of a charity may have solved the water supply problem by now.**

## **VILLAGE SCHOOL.**

**As a result of a recent discussion with the Deputy head of Wivelsfield Primary School, Philip Dawson, it is hoped to set up a “whatsapp” link with the Municipal School in Aberdeen. Mobile phones are one of the easiest forms of contact as so many people in Sierra Leone have them.**

## **CHARLES.**



**Our “main man” at St. Matthew’s, Charles Clarkson-Williams, is in the UK at the moment visiting relatives and some of us were able to entertain him to lunch on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. We were able to take a photograph while he was with us.**

## **SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>.**

**We were contacted recently by a new resident in the village who worked as a nurse in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis a few years ago. He came along to one of our committee meetings and we were moved by the stories he had to tell.**

**He has kindly agreed to share his experiences with a wider audience and we have provisionally booked the church hall for**

**Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**More details anon.**

## **FEEDBACK.**

**As always, we are always happy to hear from you if you have questions or ideas. My telephone is 01444 471336 and e-mail is [pssjwelch@gmail.com](mailto:pssjwelch@gmail.com)**

**Paul Welch  
1/6/19**

